

# CITY OF CONCORD

# NEW HAMPSHIRE

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

# Minutes FEBRUARY 3, 2012 7:30 A.M.

The meeting convened at Merrimack County Savings Bank, 190 North Main Street, Concord, NH. Refreshments were provided courtesy of Claudia Walker.

PRESENT: Christopher Carley, Byron Champlin, Mark Coen, Peter Cook, Michael DelloIacono,

Larry Gloekler, Brad Hosmer, John Hoyt, Jan McClure, William Norton, Connie

Rosemont, and Claudia Walker

ABSENT: Allen Bennett, Tim Bernier, Walter Chapin, Stephen Heavener, and Dan St. Hilaire

STAFF: Carlos P. Baía, Deputy City Manager - Development

Bev Rafferty, Administrative Assistant

GUEST: Ed Roberge, City Engineer

#### 1. MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 6, 2012 MEETING

Chairperson Carley added a comment made at last month's meeting by Mark Coen that referred to the bindery project and the notion that the city could be creating an unfair impact on existing taxpayers by moving tenants currently renting from one property owner to another. Staff will amend the minutes to insert a paragraph noting same.

Discussion ensued about the perception on the part of some in the community that smaller projects are disadvantaged in terms of receiving City incentives or understanding the municipal regulatory process.

Carlos Baía noted that the city offers the development team meetings and acknowledged that some people show up with a limited understanding of what they want to do or if it can be done in the city. Many, however, have a general understanding of the regulatory process.

Mr. Baía was asked how the city advertises the development team meeting and he noted it is on the city's web site across various pages and disseminated by word of mouth. It was also asked if it could be televised. Mr. Baía indicated that the projects coming before the team are treated as if they were confidential.

Bill Norton asked if the city had ever considered using college interns to help work with a developer in the role of ombudsmen. He noted that Wake Forest, North Carolina does this.

Byron Champlin made a motion to accept the minutes as amended; seconded by Bill Norton; motion passed unanimously.

## 2. LOUDON ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

City Engineer Ed Roberge gave a presentation on the Loudon Road Improvement Project. He provided a brief history of what has taken place since the 1999-2000 traffic corridor study done by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB). The improvement project would change Loudon Road from four lanes to three lanes and the purpose for this change is safety, character, and to make Loudon Road multimodal (cars, bikes, pedestrians, etc.). The city will be seeking a grant from DOT for this project.

Mr. Roberge reviewed the accident rates on Loudon Road, specifically from Hazen Drive to D'Amante Drive, and provided information on the traffic counts.

Mr. Roberge reviewed not only the lane reduction but how this project will affect curb cuts and driveways and noted that the project would try to reduce the number of driveways directly off Loudon Road where feasible.

When asked what the public would see if this change is completed, Mr. Roberge noted that if you look at the traffic now, with the change we won't see long gaps in the traffic flow; we'll see longer, slower traffic moving easier.

## Byron Champlin left the meeting at 8:30 A.M.

Brad Hosmer gave an example of what he's encountered on Loudon Road and feels this would be a nice change.

It was asked if this project is something that can be done in sections or would it be too small to be effective. Mr. Roberge noted it should be done as a whole to get the benefit.

There was some discussion about the left turn lanes; are they going to be safe; will there be more time waiting to turn left? Mr. Roberge noted that with the slower speed, the left turn will be better and thru-traffic will flow smoother. There may be a splitter island put in at some places. Peter Cook inquired if the islands could be phased in later and Mr. Roberge noted that there would likely be islands at the crosswalks but other islands could be done later.

Michael DelloIacono asked if a business contemplating Loudon Road as a possible location would find this new road configuration to be a negative. Mr. Baía responded that many businesses are resistant to change but it seems that today there are a number of people that by-pass Loudon Road altogether due to its chaotic traffic pattern. The improvement proposed, if successful, should make the corridor safer and more pleasant to drive along thereby enhancing the chance that drivers will want to use it rather than circumventing it thus seeing more businesses.

The timeline: The Loudon Road water main phase 2 project is anticipated to be done this Summer and, if approved by City Council and funded by a grant from DOT, the corridor improvement project could be completed by Fall 2013.

Mr. Roberge explained that there will be a public informational meeting in March and then it will go back to City Council mid-year with a recommendation. In general, the members of EDAC thought this is a good idea. Carlos Baía will inform EDAC when the item goes before City Council.

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Mark Coen would like a stronger sense of how this would impact businesses and the economic wellbeing of Loudon Road. Mr. Coen noted he understands the safety issues but wondered how this would help a business grow.

EDAC asked Mr. Roberge to check out places where a project of this type has been done and find out how business was before the project and how it is now – both in NH towns/cities as well as others from out of state. Mr. Roberge noted this could be done and he will put something together for EDAC's review.

Mr. Roberge also noted that this item will be heard through the Capital Improvement Project budget in June so EDAC can weigh in at that public hearing as well.

Jan McClure inquired when the city would be notified if the grant funding was approved and Mr. Roberge felt it would be very soon.

Due to the time, items 3 – 6 were not discussed.

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Note: Bill Norton noted that the Opportunity Corridor item on the agenda was his suggestion that EDAC revisit the zoning district in light of a possible subdivision of the property that Mr. Norton feels may not be the highest and best use for the corridor.

#### 7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly A. Rafferty Administrative Assistant